

# South Dakota Character Education



SD DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

December, 2003

“Those who are  
lifting the  
world upward  
and onward are  
those who  
encourage more  
than criticize.”

Author:  
Elizabeth Harrison

## WEB SITE:

The pictures of the children in this *Update* was found on the website that McKinley School in Pierre has put together. They have a link to their character education program. The web site is fun and well done. <http://www.pierre.k12.sd.us/mckinley/default.htm>

If your school has developed a web site and your character education activities are on it, let me know and we will feature it another month.



## These excerpts are from the book by UNESCO Learning to Live Together: Have We Failed?

(I found it interesting that schools all over the world are realizing how important it is to have a community of caring environment as we all work to educate the children of the world. Sue)

From **Morocco**: The school cannot achieve the desired quality if it only transmits knowledge. It must also play its role in education for social and moral values and must be active in the community.

From **India**: In the 1990's, involving communities in the contextual planning and implementation of programs to meet basic educational needs was found to be more productive than centralized planning with decentralized implementation. The approach is community-owned and village education plans form the basis of district education plans

From **Hungary**: Schools can only perform their complex and important role properly if they co-operate with other social agents as well; parents; the social sphere, health institutions and other partners of the local environment

From **Sweden**: Rinkeby School was facing serious problems. Parents expressed a desire for a school that was quiet, completely done, clean and a positive learning environment. For a year and a half students, parents and teachers worked at cleaning, caulking, and painting the entire interior of the school. The concept of the school has undergone dramatic change; it is now a place where adults in the community meet school activities and see

what solidarity and respect can be all about.

UNESCO listed these as universal goals for daily life in educational institutions throughout the world:

- Creating within the school a climate of tolerance and respect encouraging the development of a democratic culture.
- Providing a way for the school to function that encourages participation of the pupils in decision making.
- Proposing a shared definition of projects and learning activities.

## JUST DO SOMETHING

(From an article by Steve Goodlier)

I once stopped behind several cars in an intersection. Ahead of me stood a young woman alongside the street rubbing her bare hands together and dancing in place to keep warm. Beside her rested a sign that read, "I have a baby and no food." She was obviously crying.

As I waited for the light to turn, I felt conflicted about that young woman. Whether or not I should give money, she was obviously in need. I gave up guessing people's motives and analyzing their stories long ago. It was cold, she was cold. What should I do?

What was best?

As I wrestled with these questions, the window of the car ahead of me rolled down and the woman in the car took off her own warm gloves and handed them out the window to the shivering woman. The young woman mouthed "thank you" and a smile lit up her face.

I made myself a pledge that day to always do SOMETHING. Whether it is big or small...just do something. Any something is better than nothing. The something you do may be more important than you'll ever know.

## CHARACTER EDUCATION CONFERENCE SCHEDULED July 8,9, 2004

Ramkota Convention Center,  
Pierre, SD

Keynote speakers:  
Hal Urban  
Deb Austin Brown

Breakouts by representatives of districts who have good news to share about their character education efforts, and other presentations with emphasis on character education.

SEE YOU THERE!

## SD DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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## WE ARE ON THE WEB:

[www.state.sd.us/deca/CSCF/CEP/](http://www.state.sd.us/deca/CSCF/CEP/)

- Current newsletter
- Resources and other links
- Student opportunities
- Professional development

## THE SD PARTNERSHIPS:

The South Dakota Character Education Partnership grant was received during the summer of 2001. The goals for the grant are:

- To establish high quality character education implementation sites that embrace the virtues that are embodied in SD Code, as well as other character traits identified by the local community, in a manner which effectively models the principles of good character through the actions of school staff and students.
- To develop the lifelong skills and ethical behaviors necessary to be contributing citizens in a democratic society by integrating character education practices within the total school and community.
- To effectively link existing local, state and federal resources that merge effective school research and character development in a caring community.
- To maintain or improve student academic achievement while expanding student understanding of, commitment to, and action upon core ethical values.

Contact people for the 10 partnership districts:

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## Ideas that work:

A high school teacher works with students to help them identify their birthright gifts. Because it is often through the eyes of others that we recognize our own birthright gifts, the students are asked to interview two of their friends, their parents and/or grandparents, or another trusted adult and teacher who knows them well. The interview questions are open-ended and focus on stories or anecdotes that these persons share with the student.

Some questions relate to what they have noticed about the student, not just what they do well, but “how” they are in the world, what’s important to them, how they interact with others, the kinds of roles they play with their family or friends. Out of these interviews and their own journaling, the students begin to construct their personal Coat of Arms, which includes a section on their birthright gifts.

## GRANTS:

<http://www.grantsalert.com/education.cfm?id=12&m=1>

This is a section of a web site that has been put together to feature a quick route for teachers to classroom funding opportunities. It is just getting started, but had some pretty good opportunities

“Kids are like cement. Everything that lands on them leaves an impression”  
Readers’ Digest

